Kant, Capital, and the Prohibition of Incest

A Polemical Introduction to the Configuration of Philosophy and Modernity

Nick Land

But intuition and the concept differentiate themselves from each other specifically; because they do not inter-mix with each other.[1]

Immanuel Kant

Significantly ... incest proper, and its metaphorical form as the violation of a minor (by someone 'old enough to be her father', as the expression goes), even combines in some countries with its direct opposite, inter-racial sexual relations, an extreme form of exogamy, as the two most powerful inducements to horror and collective vengeance.[2]

Claude Lévi-Strauss

No, we do not love humanity; but on the other hand we are not nearly 'German' enough, in the sense in which the word 'German' is constantly being used nowadays, to advocate nationalism and race hatred and to be able to take pleasure in the national scabies of the heart and blood-poisoning that now leads the nations of Europe to delimit and barricade themselves against each other as if it were a matter of quarantine.[3]

Friedrich Nietzsche

For the purposes of understanding the complex network of race, gender, and class oppressions that constitute our global modernity it is very rewarding to attend to the evolution of the apartheid policies

1 Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Judgement*, Oxford 1982. The English translation omits the section in which this note is to be found (*Kritik der Urteilskraft*, Wiesbaden 1974, *Anmerkung* to section VIII of the Introduction to Kant's first edition, p. 40).

2 Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Elementary Structures of Kinship*, Boston 1969, p. 10.

3 Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, New York 1969, p. 339.

of the South African regime, since apartheid is directed towards the construction of a microcosm of the neo-colonial order; a recapitulation of the world in miniature. The most basic aspiration of the Boer state is the dissociation of politics from economic relations, so that by means of 'bantustans' or 'homelands' the black African population can be suspended in a condition of simultaneous political distance and economic proximity *vis-a-vis* the white metropolis. This policy seeks to recast the currently existing political exteriority of the black population in its relation to the society that utilizes its labour into a system of geographical relations modelled on national sovereignty. The direct dis-enfranchisement of the subject peoples would then be re-expressed within the dominant international code of ethno-geographical (national) autonomy.

World opinion discriminates between the relation South African whites have to the blacks they employ, and the relation North American whites, for instance, have to the Third World labour force they employ (directly or indirectly), because it acknowledges an indissoluble claim upon the entire South African land-mass by a population sharing an internationally recognized national identity. My contention in this paper is that the Third World as a whole is the product of a successful—although piecemeal and largely unconscious—'bantustan' policy on the part of the global *Kapital metropolis*. Any attempt by political forces in the Third World to resolve the problems of their neo-colonial integration into the world trading system on the basis of national sovereignty is as naïve as the attempt of black South Africans *would* be if they opted for a 'bantustan' solution to their particular politico-economic dilemma.

The displacement of the political consequences of wage labour relations away from the metropolis is not an incidental feature of capital accumulation, as the economic purists aligned to both the bourgeoisie and the workerist left assert. It is rather the fundamental condition of capital as nothing other than an explicit aggression against the masses. Despite inadequacies in Marx's grasp of the nation state in its colonial and neo-colonial functioning his account of "so-called primitive accumulation"[4] clearly demonstrates that the origin of wage labour relations is not itself economic, but lies in an overt *war against the people*, or their forced removal from previous conditions of subsistence. It is the outward shock-wave of this violent process of coercion, whereby the subsistence producer is driven into the market place, that determines the character of the imperialist project and its offspring. Capital has always sought to distance itself *in reality*—i.e. geographically—from this brutal political infrastructure. After all, the ideal of bourgeois politics is the absence of politics, since capital is nothing other than the consistent displacement of social decision-making into the market place. But this ideal of total de-politicization, or the absolute annihilation of resistance to market relations, is an impossible megalomaniac fantasy, and Marx's contention that labour trading at its natural price in an undistorted market (equal to the cost of its reproduction) will tend strongly to express an equally 'natural' *political* refusal of the market, continues to haunt the global bourgeoisie.

4 Karl Marx, *Capital Volume One*, London 1977, from p. 667.

The only practical option available to the rulers of capitalist societies has lain in the global dis-aggregation of the political system, accompanied by a regional distortion of the world labour trading system in favour of the working classes in the metropolitan regions ('welfare capitalism'). This is why a deep complicity has continued to exist between the form of the 'nation state' as international political agent and an economic order based upon the commodification of labour. Since it is of systematic necessity that the economic conditions of an undistorted labour market is accompanied by political crisis, the world order functions as an integrated process based upon the flow of market-priced labour into the metropolis from the Third World (on the basis of the economic form of capital production), and the export of political instability to the Third World from the metropolis (on the basis of the political form of autonomous national sovereignty). The global labour market is easily interpreted, therefore, as a sustained demographic disaster that is systematically displaced away from the political institutions of the metropolis.

This process of displacement, which is the ultimate 'base' or 'infrastructure' of capital accumulation, is dependent upon those issues of 'kinships' or 'marriage organization' (the sexual economy of gender and race) which Marxists have often tended to consider as surface features of an underlying mode of production. In this paper I shall argue that with the philosophy of Immanuel Kant Western cultural history culminates in a self-reflecting bourgeois civilization, because his thought of synthesis (or relation to alterity), and also the strangulation of this thought within his system, captures modernity as a problem. But the modernity thus symptomized by its philosophical exposition is not primarily the penultimate phase of a dialectic of society and production, it is rather the necessity that historicality itself—expansionary social and economic development, or 'synthesis'—compromises with a profound continuity whose basic aspects are on the one hand patrilineal descent, and on the other a formal logic of identity that was already concluded in its essentials by Aristotle. These two aspects, the genealogical and the logical, are functions of a position of abstract masculine subjectivity coincident with the patronymic. This position is the proto-cultural fundament of everything that is able to count as the same. The tradition is thus rooted in a communication between culture and population, whose medium is the stability ('identity') of the male line. Modernity is not merely a compromise between novel forms of commercially driven social organization and this archaic cultural pattern of patrilineal exogamy, but more fundamentally, a deepening of the compromise already integral to any exogamy that is able to remain patrilineal. It is only by understanding the inhibitive function of patriarchies in relation to exogamic dissipation (an inhibition that is supremely logical in that it conserves identity, and which is for this reason violently xenophobic) that we can make sense of capital production and its tendency towards the peculiar cultural mutation that was baptised by Mussolini as 'fascism'. This is because the restriction of cultural synthesis, based upon a strenuous

endogamy at the level of the national community, is the ultimate outcome of the concerted 'liberalization' of kinship organizations within (metropolitan) industrial societies.

A capitalist trading empire is a developed form of exogamic patriarchy, and inherits its tensions. Domination of the other is inhibited in principle from developing into full absorption, because it is the residual alterity of the other that conditions the generation of surplus. The parallel difference between a labour market and a slave market is based on the fact that one cannot do business with a slave (but only with a slave-owner), and similarly, one cannot base a kinship system upon a harem. The prevalence of slave-labour within the Hitlerite new order in Eastern Europe is thus a clear indication that the Nazi conquests were in an important sense 'post-imperialist'. In contrast to the fascist 'mixed economy' of slavery and extermination, colonial wage-labour exploitation, even to the point of murder through impoverishment, leaves open the possibility of a radical de-stabilization of the metropolis. But what is crucial to the demarcation of a colonial from a neo-colonial system is a transnational diffusion of ethnicity. As soon as a metropolitan society disengages its organization of kinship and citizenship from its international economic syntheses it already reveals proto-fascist traits, and on this basis it is easy to see that the radical aspect to the colonial project—the explosion of national identity and the dissipation of metropolitan transcendence—was strangled at birth within Western history (with the emergence of Judaeo-Christian race theories).

The disaster of world history is that capitalism was never the progressive unwinding of patrilineage through a series of generalized exploitative relations associated with a trans-cultural exogamy, leading to an uncontrollable eruption of feminine (i.e. migrant) alterity into the father's heartland, and thus to the emergence of a radical—or ethnically disruptive and post-patriarchal—synthesis. Instead, kinship and trade were systematically isolated from each other, so that the internationalization of the economy was coupled with an entrenchment of xenophobic (nationalistic) kinship practices, maintaining a concentration of political and economic power within an isolated and geographically sedentary ethnic stock. Thus, when we discuss capital in its historical concreteness, we are simultaneously discussing a frustration of the cultural tendency of human societies towards expansive exogamy. Capital is the point at which a culture refuses the possibility—which it has itself engendered—of pushing the prohibition of incest towards its limit.

I want to touch upon this condition of modernity—which can be awkwardly described as patriarchal neo-colonial capital accumulation, but which I shall come to name 'inhibited synthesis'—not as a historian or a political theorist, but as a philosopher. The philosophical task in relation to modernity is that of delineating and challenging the *type of thinking* which characterizes it. But what we are to understand as 'thinking' is not at all clear in advance, indeed, the very thought of the 'in advance' (which Kant called the *a priori*) is itself the predominant

trait of our contemporary reason. Western societies departed from the stagnant theocracies of the Middle Ages through a series of more or less violent convulsions that have engendered an explosive possibility of novelty on earth. But these same societies simultaneously shackled this new history by systematically compromising it. This ambiguous movement of 'enlightenment', which characterizes the emergence of industrial societies trading in commodities, is intellectually stimulated by its own paradoxical nature. An enlightenment society wants both to learn and to legislate for all time, to open itself to the other and to consolidate itself from within, to expand indefinitely whilst reproducing itself as the same. Its ultimate dream is to grow whilst remaining identical to what it was, to touch the other without vulnerability. Where the European *ancien régime* was parochial and insular, modernity is *appropriative*. It lives in a profound but uneasy relation to an outside that both attracts and repels it, a relation that it precariously resolves within itself on the basis of *exploitation,* or interaction from a position of unilateral mastery. I think it is likely that the volatile mixture of hatred and desire that typifies an exploitative culture bears comparison with the psychology of rape.

The paradox of enlightenment, then, is an attempt to fix a stable relation with what is radically other, since insofar as the other is rigidly positioned within a relation it is no longer fully other. If before encountering otherness we already know what its relation to us will be, we have obliterated it in advance. And this brutal denial is the effective implication of the thought of the *a priori,* since if our certainties come to us without reference to otherness we have *always already* torn out the tongue of alterity before entering into relation with it. This aggressive logical absurdity (the absurdity of *logic itself*) reaches its zenith in the philosophy of Kant, whose basic problem was to find an account for the possibility of what he termed "synthetic *a priori* knowledge"; which is knowledge that is both given in advance by ourselves, and yet adds to what we know. As we have seen, this problem is the same as that of accounting for the possibility of modernity or enlightenment, which is to say, of the inhibited encounter with alterity.

Modern philosophy between René Descartes (1596-1650) and Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) is usually retrospectively understood in terms of the two basic tendencies which we refer to as 'empiricism' and 'rationalism'. No philosopher was a perfect and consistent exemplar of either of these tendencies, but the exponents of each tended to become increasingly radical in one direction or the other. By the time Kant wrote his first great critique, *The Critique of Pure Reason*[5], he was able to take the writings of David Hume (1711-76) as definitive for empirical thought, and those of Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646-1716) as definitive for rationalism. He took the basic argument of the empiricists to be that knowledge is *synthetic* and *a posteriori*, meaning that it takes the form of an *addition* to what is inherent to reason, and thus follows from experience (or an encounter with what is outside ourselves). In contrast to this, he saw the rationalists to be

5 Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Pure Reason*, London 1964.

arguing that knowledge is characteristically *analytic* and *a priori*, meaning that it is derived from what is already inherent to reason, and thus anticipates experience by constructing systems of logical deduction from basic axioms. Knowledge is analytic or synthetic depending on whether its source is intrinsic or extrinsic to the faculty of reason, and *a priori* or *a posteriori* depending on whether it precedes or succeeds the contact with sensation, or with what is outside reason. It is with these pairs of concepts, the analytic/synthetic couple and the *a priori*/ *a posteriori* couple, that Kant determines the structure of his own thinking in relation to that of his recent predecessors.

Kant thought that both empiricist and rationalist philosophers had accepted the simple alignment of the synthetic with the *a posteriori* and of the analytic with the *a priori*. This is to say, the relation between these couples had seemed to be itself analytic, so that to speak of analytic *a priori* judgements would add nothing to the concept of the analytic, or in other words, an analysis of the concept 'analytic' would yield the concept of the '*a priori*' as already implicit within it. This assumption was not accepted by Kant, who re-aligned the two pairs of concepts in a perpendicular fashion to form a grid, thus yielding four permutations. He granted the elimination of any analytic *a posteriori* knowledge, but clung doggedly to the possibility of knowledge that would be both synthetic and *a priori*. This new conception of knowledge was relevant to an 'object' that had not previously been formulated: the conditions of experience. Kant described his 'Copernican revolution' in philosophy as a shift from the question 'what must the mind be like in order to know?' to the question 'what must objects be like in order to be known?' The answers to this latter question would provide a body of synthetic *a priori* knowledge, telling us about experience without being derived from experience. It would justify the emergence of knowledge that was both new and timelessly certain, grounding the enlightenment culture of a civilization confronting an ambiguous dependence upon novelty.

Because a developed knowledge of the conditions of experience presupposes a relation to the outside it is synthetic and not analytic, but because it concerns the pure form of the relation as such and not the sensory material involved in the relation it is *a priori* and not *a posteriori*. It is solely concerned with the forms of appearance, or the unchanging manner in which things must be if they are to be for us. Kant calls this pure form of synthesis 'transcendental', and opposes it to the inconstant content of synthesis, with which the empiricists had been concerned, and which he calls 'empirical'. Kant's 'object' is thus the universal form of the relation to alterity; that which must of necessity be the same in the other in order for it to appear to us. This universal form is that which is necessary for anything to be 'on offer' for experience, it is the 'exchange value' that first allows a thing to be marketed to the enlightenment mind. Between medieval scholasticism and Kant Western reason moves from a parochial economy to a system in which, abandoning the project of repressing the traffic with alterity, one resolves instead to control the system of

trade. With the overthrow of the *ancien régime* it became impossible to simply exclude novelty, it could only be appropriated, stamped with a constant form, and integrated into an immutable formal system.

In *The Elementary Structures of Kinship* Claude Lévi-Strauss notes the frequent distinction made by various societies between normal and 'rich food'. Normal food is consumed by its producers as a means to their subsistence, whilst rich food is given to another to consume, and received from another. This is not primarily based upon a differentiation of social classes within a system of production, but rather, upon a differentiation between tribes, or separate systems of production. The difference between rich food and normal food maps onto the difference between filiation (relation by blood) and alliance (relation by marriage). This is because rich food occupies the position of women within a marriage system regulated by patrilineal exogamy, with its producer renouncing it for himself, and thus echoing the prohibition of incest. What is of particular philosophical interest, however, is that it also marks a distinction between the 'rational' (analytic) and the 'empirical' (synthetic), and thus defines a terrain upon which we can sketch an economy of knowledge. Rich food comes from outside the system, and the contortions undergone by structural anthropology in its project to recapture it within an expanded system of relations replays Kant's efforts to reduce synthesis to an expanded horizon of unchanging forms. If 'rich food' is the primordial element of trade its metamorphosis into the modern 'commodity' can be seen as a suppression of radical synthesis, the problematic process which provides enlightenment reason with its object of thought.

The cultural inhibition of synthesis takes a form that Lévi-Strauss calls 'dual organization'.[6] A dual organization arises when two groups form a closed system of reciprocal exchange, in which each consumes the rich food, and marries the women, of the other. Such organizations reproduce themselves culturally through shared myths articulated around basic dualities (day/night, sun/moon, up-river/down-river etc.). The function of these myths is to capture alterity within a system of rules, to provide it with an identity, and to exclude the possibility of the radically different. It should not surprise us, therefore, that Kant inherited a philosophical tradition whose decisive concepts were organized into basic couples (spirit/matter, form/content, abstract/concrete, universal/particular, etc.). He delineates some basic structure of this tradition in the section of the *Critique of Pure Reason* called the 'Transcendental Dialectic'. In this section he interprets this dichotomous heritage as a *problem* (to which Kant gives the name 'antinomy') and initiates a new phase of Western philosophy, now characterized as the critique of metaphysics. Kant argues that the tendency of previous metaphysics to conceive coherent, but unpersuasive and antagonistic, intellectual systems resulted from the application of pure (transcendental) concepts to arguments concerning the nature of things in themselves (noumena). The critical philosophy therefore restricts the jurisdiction of all concepts to the realm of possible appearance (intuition), suggesting (as we have seen) that the *a priori*

6 *The Elementary Structures of Kinship*, pp. 69-83.

forms of knowledge have no purchase on any reality transcending the phenomenon. Oppositional terms are no longer accepted as descriptions capturing reality, but are interpreted as pure forms of reason that can only be meaningfully deployed theoretically when applied to objects of possible appearance, which fall within the legislative domain of the 'faculty' which Kant calls 'the understanding' (*Verstand*).

Since 'reality' is itself a transcendental concept, Kant's usage of a distinction between appearance and reality to restrict the deployment of pure concepts already suggests a crucial difficulty with his project, since every attempt to formulate a relation or distinction between the phenomenal and noumenal realms (the world as it appears to us or is understood, and the world as it is in itself) must itself relapse into the pre-critical and illegitimate deployment of conceptual thought. One crucial symptom of this is that the structure of Kantian critique itself perpetuates the oppositional form of metaphysical thought, since its resolution of the antinomies depends upon the mobilization of further dichotomies, in particular those of transcendental/empirical, phenomenon/noumenon, concept/intuition, and analysis/synthesis. In other words, Kant still wants to say something about radical alterity, even if it is only that it has no relevance to us, yet he has deprived himself of the right to all speculation about the nature of what is beyond appearance. The vocabulary that would describe the other of metaphysics is itself inscribed within metaphysics, since the inside and the outside are both conceptually determined from the inside, within a binary myth or cultural symptom of dual organization. It is thus the inhibition of synthesis—the delimitation of alterity in advance—that sets up the modern form of the ontological question: 'how do we know that matter exists?' That the very existence of materiality is problematic for enlightenment thought is symptomatic of the colonial trading systems that correspond to it. Alterity cannot be registered unless it can be inscribed within the system, according to the interconnected axes of exchange value (price) and the patronymic, or, in other words, as a commodity with an owner.

What falls outside this recognized form is everything that resists commodification, the primordial independence that antedates the constitution of the destituted proletarian. As I have suggested, this inchoate mass of more or less explicit resistance to capital is isolated outside the metropolis by a combination of automatic economic processes (the concentration of poverty) and restrictive kinship practices. Modern capital has therefore brought about a fundamental dislocation between filiation and alliance by simultaneously de-regulating alliance and abstracting it from all kinship implications. The primordial anthropological bond between marriage and trade is dissolved, in order that capital can ethnically and geographically quarantine its consquences from itself. The question of racism, which arises under patriarchal capital as the default of a global trade in women (a parochialism in the system of misogynistic violence; the non-emergence of a trans-cultural exogamy), is thus more complex than

it might seem, and is bound in profound but often paradoxical ways to the functioning of patriarchy and capital. Systematic racism is a sign that class positions within the general (trans-national) economy are being distributed on a racial basis, which implies an effective, if not a juridical, apartheid.

Kant was able to remain bourgeois without overtly promoting racism only because he also remained an idealist, or in other words a Christian (a "cunning Christian" as Nietzsche calls him[7]), and identified universality with ideality rather than with power. Kant's economy of the concept, which is the assimilation of experience into a system of exchange values, is irresistable in principle, and thus does not recognize a problem of rebellion. It is only with the implicit recognition of the need for a systematic *evacuation of rebellion from* the metropolis by means of a geographically distorted labour market that racism arises in its contemporary form, which is ultimately that of a restricted franchise (on a national basis) over the political management of the global means of production. It is no longer a question of 'taxation without representation' (except by means of interest payments), but rather of a metropolitan capital seeking to abstract itself from all political reference, becoming 'off-shore', although not to the extent that it loses its geo-political condition *of* existence (the U.S. war-machine). The increasingly rigorous differentiation of marriage from trade, or politics from economics, finds its ultimate conceptual definition in the thought of a moral agency which is utterly impervious to learning, communication, or exchange.

7 Friedrich Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*, Harmondsworth 1982, p. 39.

It is in his second critique, *The Critique of Practical Reason*[8], that Kant capitalizes upon the ethno-ethical consequences of the first: that justice must be prosecuted without negotiation. Kant's moral theory is an ethics of appropriative modernity, and breaks with the parochial or scriptural morality of the *ancien régime*. Where Judaic, Christian, and Islamic moral codes served as legitimations of imperial projects in their periods of ascendency, Kantian morality is, inversely, legitimated by the position of imperial or universal jurisdiction. Only that is moral which can be demanded of every rational being unconditionally, in the name of an ultra-empire that Kant names the 'empire of ends' (*Reich der Zwecke*). The law of this empire is called the 'categorical imperative', which means a law stemming solely from the purity of the concept, and thus dictated by the absolute monologue of colonial reason. In the purity of categorical morality the incestuous blood-line of the pharoahs is still detectable, but sublimated into an impersonal administration. The law is that which cannot be legitimately discussed, and which is *therefore an unresponsive* or unilateral imposition. It is not difficult to see that the second critique distills the xenophobic violence of the first and elevates it to the most extreme possible fanaticism. Where theoretical knowledge is open to a limited negotiation with alterity, practical or moral certainty is *forbidden* from entering into relation with anything outside itself, except to issue commands. Kant's practical subject already pre-figures a deaf *führer*, barking impossible orders that seem to come from another world.

8 Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Practical Reason*, London 1889.

Kant makes a further strenuous effort to push forward the horizon of *a priori* synthesis in his third critique, *The critique of Judgement*.[9] If the first critique corresponds to appropriative economy or commodification, and the second critique corresponds to imperial jurisdiction, the third critique corresponds to the exercize of war at those margins of the global system that continue to resist both the market and the administration. It is concerned with the type of pleasure that is experienced when an object demonstrates an extra-juridical submission or abasement before the faculty of judgement; an experience which Kant associates with the contemplation of beauty. The first critique already exhibits a conception of excess or *a priori* synthesis that generalizes the principles of the labour market to all objects of theoretical cognition and transforms the understanding into a form of intellectual capital. In the third critique there is a far more aggressive conception of excess, which generates a feeling of delight, because it is essentially *extortionate*. This excess is not a surplus of certainty stemming from dimensions of objectivity possessed in advance of intuition, and thus by right, but rather a surplus of purchase upon the object. Kant argues that we have no transcendental right to expect natural laws to be sufficiently homogeneous for us to grasp. When confronting the heterogeneity of intuition, reason must engage in a kind of Pascalian wager; assuming an intelligible system of nature because it has nothing to lose by not doing so. The submission of the outside in general to the inside in general, or of nature to the idea, i.e. conquest, is not guaranteed by any principle. The capitalist feels a neutral satisfaction in the production of 'normal profits', but the conqueror feels *exultation* in the attainment of victory, precisely because *there was no reason to expect it*. Kant's advice to the imperial war-machine in his third critique can be summarized as this: ''treat all resistance as if it were less than you might justifiably fear''. The *Critique of Judgement* thus projects the global victory of capitalized reason as pure and exuberant ambition.

The only possible politics of purity is fascism, or a militant activism rooted in the inhibitory and exclusive dimensions of a metropolitanism. Racism, as a regulated, automatic, and indefinitely suspended process of genocide (as opposed to the hysterical and unsustainable genocide of the Nazis) is the real condition of persistence for a global economic system that is dependent upon an aggregate price of labour approximating to the cost of its bare subsistence, and therefore upon an expanding pool of labour power which must be constantly 'stimulated' into this market by an annihilating poverty. If fascism is evaded in metropolitan societies it is only because a chronic passive genocide trails in the wake of capital and commodity markets as they displace themselves around the Third World, 'disciplining' the labour market, and ensuring that basic commodity prices are not high enough to distribute capital back into primary producer societies.

The forces most unambiguously antagonistic to this grotesque process are 'exogamic' (or, less humanistically, 'exotropic'); the synthetic energies that condition all surplus value, and yet co-exist with capital

9 *Critique of Judgement*, op. cit.

only under repression. A radical international socialism would not be a socialist ideology generalized beyond its culture of origin, but a programme of collectivity or unrestrained synthesis that springs from the theoretical and libidinal dissolution of national totality. To get to a world without nations would in itself guarantee the achievement of all immediately post-capitalist social and economic goals. It is this revolutionary requirement for a spontaneously *homeless* subversion that gives an urgency to certain possibilities of feminist politics, since the erasure of matrilineal genealogy within the patriarchal machine means that fascisizing valorizations of ancestry have no final purchase on the feminine 'subject'. The patronymic has irrecoverably divested all the women who fall under it of any recourse to an ethno-geographical identity; only the twin powers of father and husband suppress the nomadism of the anonymous female fluxes that patriarchy oppressively manipulates, violates, and psychiatrizes. By allowing women some access to wealth and social prestige the liberalization of patriarchy has sought to defuse the explosive force of this anonymity, just as capital has tended to reduce the voluptuous excess of exogamic conjugation to the stability of nationally segmented trading circuits. The increasingly incestual character of economic order—reaching its zenith in racist xenophobia—is easily masked as a series of 'feminist' reforms of patriarchy; as a de-commodification of woman, a diminution of the obliterating effects of the patronymic, and a return to the mother. This is the sentimental 'feminism' that Nietzsche despised, and whose petit-bourgeois nationalist implications he clearly saw. The only resolutely revolutionary politics is feminist in orientation, but only if the synthetic forces mobilized under patriarchy are extrapolated beyond the possibility of assimilation, rather than being criticized from the perspective of mutilated genealogies. Genealogy as the dissipation of recuperative origins (Nietzsche), not as sentimental nostalgia.

The women of the earth are segmented only by *their* fathers and husbands. Their praxial fusion is indistinguishable from the struggle against the micro-powers that suppress them most immediately. That is why the proto-fascism of nationality laws and immigration controls tends to have a sexist character as well as a racist one. It is because women are the historical realization of the potentially euphoric synthetic or communicative function which patriarchy both exploits and *inhibits* that *they* are invested with a revolutionary destiny, and it is only through their struggle that politics will be able to escape from all fatherlands. In her meticulous studies of patriarchy Luce Irigaray has amply demonstrated the peculiar urgency of the feminist question,[10] although the political solutions she suggests are often feebly nostalgic, sentimental, and pacifistic. Perhaps only Monique Wittig has adequately grasped the inescapably *military* task faced by any serious revolutionary feminism,[11] and it is difficult not to be dispirited by the enormous reluctance women have shown historically to prosecute their struggle with sufficient ruthlessness and aggression. The left tends to be evasive about the numbing violence intrinsic to revolutionary war, and feminism is often particularly fastidious in this

10 Amongst the growing body of Luce Irigaray's work available in English the most powerful arguments are to be found, perhaps, in *Speculum of the Other Woman*, and in essays amongst those compiled in *This Sex which is not One*, especially 'Women on the market' (*Le marché des femmes*) and 'When the goods get together' (*Des marchandises entre elles*).

11 See especially; Monique Wittig, *Les Guérillères*, Paris 1969.

respect, even reverting to absurd mystical and Ghandian ideologies. If feminist struggles have been constantly de-prioritized in theory and practice it is surely because of their idealistic recoil from the currency of violence, which is to say, from the only definitive 'matter' of politics.

The state apparatus of an advanced industrial society can certainly not be defeated without a willingness to escalate the cycle of violence without limit. It is a terrible fact that atrocity is not the perversion, but the very motor of such struggles: the language of inexorable political will. A revolutionary war against a modern metropolitan state can only be fought in hell. It is this harsh truth that has deflected Western politics into an increasingly servile reformism, whilst transforming nationalist struggles into the sole arena of vigorous contention against particular configurations of capital. But, as I hope I have demonstrated, such nationalist struggles are relevant only to the geographical modulation of capital, and not to the radical jeopardizing of neo-colonialism (inhibited synthesis) as such. Victorious Third World struggles, so long as they have been successfully localized, do not lead to realistic post-capitalist achievements, and certainly not to post-patriarchal ones, since the conservation of the form of the nation state is itself enough to guarantee the reinsertion of a society into the system of inhibited synthesis. For as long as the dynamic of guerilla war just leads to new men at the top—with all that this entails in terms of the communication between individuated sovereignties—history will continue to look bleak. For it is only when the pervasive historical bond between masculinity and war is broken by effective feminist violence that it will become possible to envisage the uprooting of the patriarchal endogamies that orchestrate the contemporary world order. With the abolition of the inhibition of synthesis—of Kantian thought—a sordid cowardice will be washed away, and cowardice is the engine of greed. But the only conceivable end of Kantianism is the end of modernity, and to reach this we must foster new Amazons in our midst.